

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OREP, PFOR, GB, KN, KS

SUBJ: CODEL DIGGS - MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BONGO - KOREA

REF: LIBREVILLE 1048

1. DURING JULY 11 MEETING WITH CODEL (SEPTTEL), PRESIDENT BONGO INITIALLY GAVE RESUME OF HIS JUST COMPLETED TRIP TO ROMANIA AND FAR EAST, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON REASONS WHY HE HAD NOT GONE TO NORTH KOREA. AS HE HAD DONE IN HIS AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE (REFTEL), PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED THAT NORTH KOREANS HAD TRIED TO INTERFERE IN GABONESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY ATTEMPTING TO PRESSURE PRESIDENT INTO CANCELING SOUTH KOREA TRIP AND THAT PRESIDENT COULD NOT TOLERATE THIS ACTION. PRESIDENT HAD BEEN INVITED BY BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH KOREANS, ALL ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE WITH THEIR EMBASSIES IN LIBREVILLE AND VIA SPECIAL EMISSARIES BONGO HAD SENT TO COUNTRIES, AND BONGO NOT ABOUT TO CHANGE SCHEDULE IN MID VOYAGE BECAUSE OF PRESSURE FROM NORTH KOREA. HE WAS EITHER INVITED TO VISIT NORTH KOREA OR HE WAS NOT. WHAT HE WAS DOING BEFORE OR AFTER WAS NO BUSINESS OF NORTH KOREANS BUT RATHER OF GABONESE. IN AN ASIDE, BONGO MENTIONED THAT CHINESE HAD BEEN MUCH WISER, NOT PRESSURING PRESIDENT BUT GENTLY SUGGESTING THAT BONGO

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NOT GO TO EITHER KOREA BUT RATHER REMAIN IN PEKING FOR

STATE VISIT. BONGO SAID HE POLITELY DECLINED THIS SUGGESTION.

2. BONGO SAID THAT NORTH KOREANS HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN POLITICS AND POLITICAL ECONOMICS. HE, BONGO, WAS NOT INTERESTED IN POLITICS FOR SAKE OF POLITICS. FANCY SLOGANS AND IDEOLOGIES WERE JUST SO MUCH NOISE. WHAT PRESIDENT WAS INTERESTED IN WAS POLITICAL ECONOMY--POLITICS THAT WENT HAND IN HAND WITH ECONOMICS IN ORDER TO DEVELOP HIS COUNTRY. SOUTH KOREA UNDERSTOOD THIS AND WOULD BE AIDING GABON. BONGO MENTIONED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT GABON WOULD SUPPORT SOUTH KOREA IN UN. NORTH KOREANS JUST INTERESTED IN COUNTING UP NUMBERS OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, MAKING SPEECHES AND SHOUTING SLOGANS. PRESIDENT SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY SEVERAL OF HIS FELLOW AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE HAD VISITED NORTH KOREA, HAD BEEN GIVEN WOMEN, AND BEEN TAKEN IN BY NORTH KOREAN SLOGANS. THEY THEN HAD RETURNED HOME TO FACE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH NOTHING BUT WORDS. HE, BONGO, WAS NOT GOING TO ACCEPT NORTH KOREAN WOMEN OR BE BRAINWASHED BY SLOGANS AND IDEOLOGIES OF NORTH KOREANS OR ANYONE ELSE. BONGO ALSO SAID THAT SEVERAL AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE (INCLUDING, ACCORDING TO AFP, TOGOLESE PRESIDENT EYADEMA) HAD CALLED HIM IN PEKING AND ASKED HIM TO CANCEL SOUTH KOREAN TRIP. AT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS'S MEETING JUST AFTER RETURN, PRESIDENT SAID THAT SOME MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED TO GO FARTHER AND BREAK OFF RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA BUT THAT BONGO HAD DECIDED TO GO SLOWLY. IF NORTH KOREANS WOULD PRESENT THEIR EXCUSES, THINGS MIGHT GRADUALLY GO BAK TO NORMAL. BUT, IF NOT, PRESIDENT WOULD JUST SAY "THANK YOU" AND CLOSE HIS EMBASSY.

3. COMMENTS OF PRESIDENT TO CODEL REINFORCED HIS COMMENTS AT AIRPORT REPORTED REFTEL.
BAAS

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